

**Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children
Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2011**

Stephen	Brechbiel		Bob	Atwater
Susan	Humbert		Melanie	Hester
Sally	Hunter		Esther	High
Nicole	Jimerson		Cathy	Kea
Sheila	Knapp		Felix	Keyes
Shary	Maskel		Vicki	Simmons
Ann	Maxwell		Laura	Wiley
Teresa	Mebane			
Linda	Nelson			
Karen	Madrone	For Lisa Phillips		
Jana	Plemmons			
Jill	Scercy			
Leigh	Mobley	For Joe Sutton		
Gloria	Upperman			
Deborah	Whitfield			
Cynthia	Wilson			

Visitors

Cynthia	Daniels-Hall
Sarah	Ferguson
Brenda	Monforti
Jennifer	ODonoghue
Amada	Parks
Cheryl	Posner-Cahill
Amanda	Parks

DPI Staff / Presenters

Tish	Bynum
Bobbie	Grammer
Kate	Neale
Maria	Pietre-Martin
Mary	Watson
Tom	Winton

Welcome / Review of Agenda

Nicole Jameson, opened the meeting with a warm welcome and introductions were made by members and guests. Chairperson Jimerson requested the Council review the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

A motion made and seconded to approve meeting the September 15, 2010 meeting minutes with edits. (The December 16, 2010 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.)

Review of Race to the Top

Maria Pitre-Martin, Director of the Curriculum and Instruction Division, presented a review of the Race to the Top (RttT) initiative. RttT focuses on building capacity, developing infrastructure and creating sustainable reform with ultimate goals of high graduation rates, strong student achievement and all students being career- and college-ready. RttT is about change and transformation.

Each District and Charter School submitted a plan (scope of work) for RttT. NC's plan is the compilation of these plans into one. By 2014, NC hopes to have a plan that includes quality standards and assessments, data systems to improve instruction and turnaround of the lowest-achieving schools. All the plans as well as monthly updates can be viewed at www.ncpublicschools.org/rttt/.

RttT is being rolled out by requesting all LEAs to have a professional development leadership team consisting of 9-13 people based on the size of the LEA. This professional development leadership team will receive training/information from DPI in order to train others within their LEA to build capacity.

DPI's infrastructure was already setup to implement large initiatives. DPI's infrastructure is based on the regional concept. There are regional leads from District and School Transformation. These regional leads are local and go into local schools to assist in supporting the LEAs' RttT plans. Divisions within DPI are also set up on a regional structure to assist.

The RttT plans from the LEAs and Charter Schools have four areas of focus: technology, personnel, strategic staffing and professional development.

- Technology includes state-of-the-art facilities where broadband and wireless networks are supported and easily accessed; effective integration of technology tools and the new curriculum to increase student learning and achievement; and daily student and staff use of technology tools and applications to increase student and staff engagement.
- Personnel will focus on more dedicated staff and equipment to establish a proactive schedule and set of policies for change; and more in-house staff to provide job-embedded professional development on new initiatives.
- Strategic staffing includes in-house efforts regarding the induction and mentoring of new teachers; targeted training the area of leadership preparation at various levels of administration in a school district; concentration on various methods of recruitment and retention of new staff; and differentiation of pay for educators who meet a rigorous standard of performance.

- Professional development is the biggest area within district plans and includes an increase in technology-based professional development; professional development is needed to support the new curriculum; support for educators in interpreting and responding to data; and training is also needed to effectively utilize the Instructional Improvement System (ISS). Some Districts have already implemented Saturday trainings that are well attended.

Changes to Deaf/HH & VI Services

Tom Winton, Section Chief of the Sensory Support and Assistive Technology with the Exceptional Children Division, provided the Council an update on the Transition of the Residential Schools to DPI.

Last July, the General Assembly passed a budget bill that included language that the two Schools for the Deaf and Governor Morehead School would transfer from Dept. of Health and Human Services to DPI effective June 1, 2011. A transition plan for this transfer needed to be put in place. The Office of Education Services, that provided administrative services for the residential schools, was eliminated. Resource Support positions from the Schools for the Deaf and Governor Morehead Outreach Program positions were to transfer to the Exceptional Children Division effective October 1, 2010. It was recommended that the preschool programs within the Office of Education Services be housed in the Office of Early Learning.

The EC Division inherited a total of 19 positions. These 19 positions were utilized to create a much needed statewide system of support for deaf/hard of hearing and visually impaired students. Prior to this transfer, there was one statewide consultant for deaf/hard of hearing and one statewide consultant for visually impaired.

A statewide system of support for these low incidence populations is greatly needed since 97% of visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing students are served within LEAs. Some school systems have more visually impaired and/or deaf/hard of hearing students than all of the Schools for the Deaf and Governor Morehead School combined. The EC Division mission is to have the residential schools as part of a continuum, ideally with students returning to their home LEA and graduating.

As directed by the legislation, DPI did submit a transition plan in December 2010. There are ongoing meetings of DPI leadership regarding aspects of the transition. The residential schools employ approximately 502 staff as well as provide a multitude of student services that will transfer to DPI effective June 1, 2011.

Barbria Bacon is the interim superintendent for the residential schools and is currently immersed in the process of selecting a permanent superintendent.

DPI just completed a comprehensive needs analysis on the residential schools and the reports will be forthcoming.

SPP/APR

Nancy Johnson, State Performance Plan Consultant for the Exceptional Children Division, provided the Council with an overview of current data and reviewed proposed revisions to the State Performance Plan (SPP) / Annual Performance Report (APR).

NC's SPP was submitted to the US Department of Education on February 2, 2011.

The report included graduation rate data based on 2008-09 data. NC students with disabilities that graduate within four years is 56%; within five years is 63.5%. The target set by the federal government is 85%.

Indicator 2 reports drop out rates, which is decreasing. The current rate is 7.1%. Students with disabilities are staying in school longer and the rate is lower than general ed students.

Indicator 7 for preschool outcomes is based on 2008-09 data. The Council is asked to provide any input or concerns as a stakeholder. Summary Statement one is made growth; Summary Statement two is left functioning at normal limits according to COSF baseline. The Council did not provide any concerns at this time.

On compliance Indicators the target is 100% established by the federal government. If a state is at 75% or less on a compliance Indicator, the state is considered substantially noncompliant. NC is getting more confident with its data. NC has learned how to make reasonable targets and obtain all data needed to set the target. Overall, NC is positive about the outcome and compliance areas within the SPP.

Agency Update

Mary Watson, Director of the Exceptional Children Division, provided the following comments/updates:

The Council was thanked for their time on the Council and input into the SPP/APR. The SPP/APR has its strengths but is cumbersome at times. The Council's work as a stakeholder is important.

EC Directors' Institute took place last week. It was very informative and exciting.

The Division is very proud to have released a Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) video which has been well received. RtI is a nationwide concept to support all children, not just special ed students.

Summer Institutes will be offered again this year, mostly in July. The institutes are intense professional development opportunities based on high-quality, research-based

training on all areas under the EC Division. The location for most institutes is UNC – Greensboro.

The 61st Conference on Exceptional Children is October 31 – November 1, 2011 in Greensboro at the Koury Convention Center. The Council is invited and will receive a free (general conference only) registration. More to details to come in the future.

Focused monitoring and verification visits keep the Division very busy.

Now the Division is also conducting fiscal monitoring. Fiscal monitoring verifies fiscal expenditures for accuracy and appropriateness. Assistant Director Laura Snyder is the key person for this activity. To date, 43 desk audits are complete as well as five out of 10 onsite visits. All of these will be reviewed by OSEP during NC's federal fiscal audit this year.

NC Virtual Public Schools / EC pilots worked great. Students across all disability categories enjoyed taking virtual courses and performed very well. Unfortunately, there is now a per-child charge to take a virtual course. You may contact your state representatives with any concerns with this issue.

Meeting adjourned.